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Wilcox, E. S. Peoria, Ill

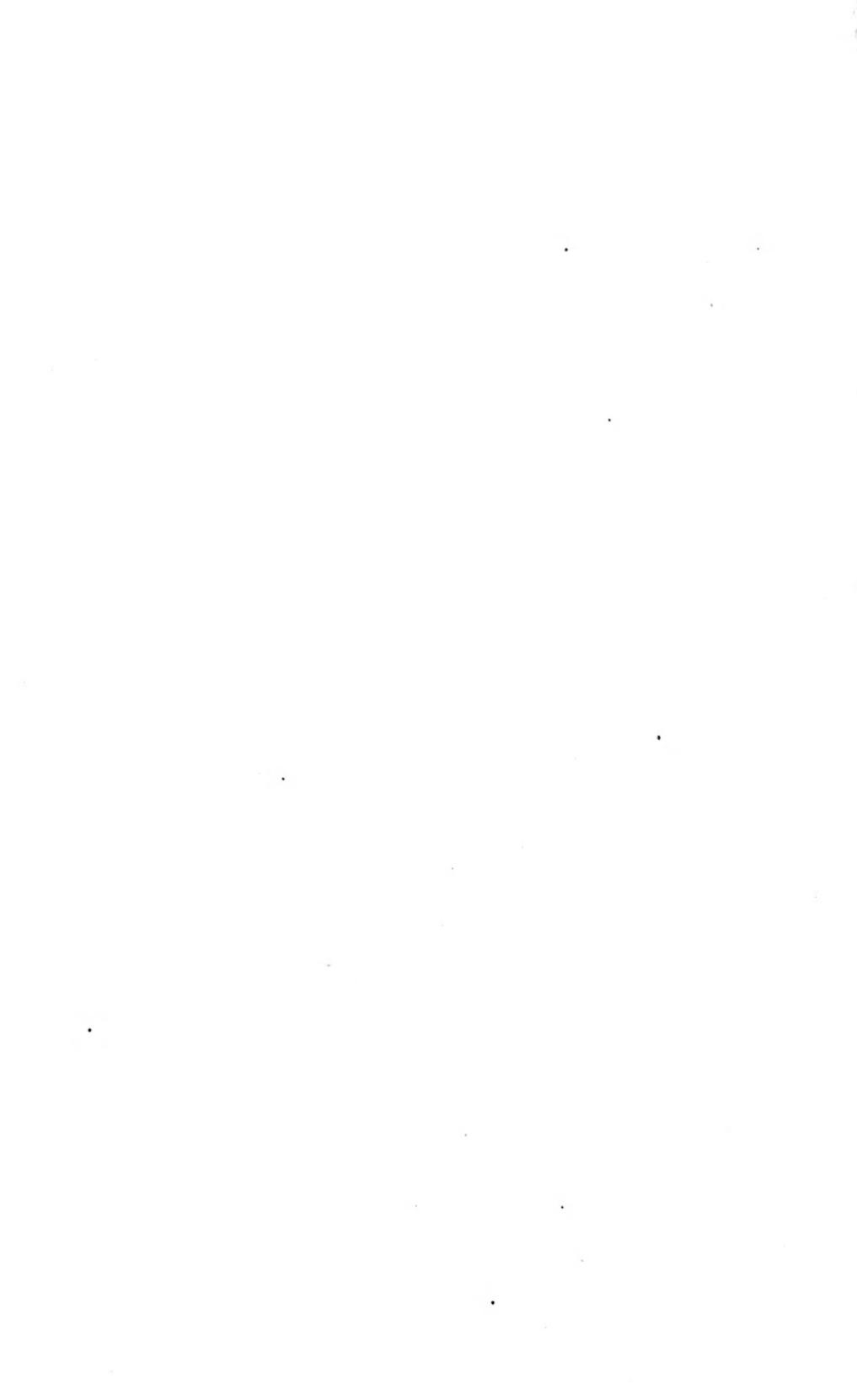
All address before the Knox
county historical society, Peoria,
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Book 315 V6

PRESENTED BY



ADDRESS BEFORE THE KNOX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY GALESBURG, ILLINOIS

BY
E. S. WILLCOX OF PEORIA, ILL.
APRIL 28, 1906.

A few years ago in Boston, having an hour to spare, I left the busy crowds on Tremont street, crossed Charles river and discovered what I was seeking, a diminutive park known as Winthrop Square, hidden in the heart of the residence district of Charlestown.

This square, perhaps twice as large as our Galesburg square, is neatly inclosed with an iron fence, has green grass plats, neatly kept walks, fine old shade trees and comfortable seats for people seeking quiet or rest. The wide entrance to the square is flanked on each side by large bronze tablets, some eight feet wide by twelve feet high, I should say, on the faces of which are inscribed in imperishable letters, the names of the officers and soldiers who fell in the battle of Bunker Hill, June 17, 1775—eleven officers and one hundred and forty-two men.

Sitting there that June afternoon and looking between the massive bronze tablets along the rising street, I saw Bunker Hill and its noble monument towering in solemn isolation before me.

I was there in search of one name in particular, said to be inscribed on those bronze pages. In a separate panel at the bottom I found the name of Maj. Gen. Joseph Warren across the whole face of the panel and above his name one line—*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*—the words he uttered when going to meet his death in battle. Then follow in double columns the names of ten other officers who fell that day.

The fifth name under that of Warren was the one I was looking for, that of Capt. William Meacham. My mother's name was Mary Meacham, Capt. Meacham was her grandfather, my great-grandfather.

My mother had often told me that her grandfather was killed in that

battle and there now at last I read his name inscribed on that immortal roll.

Alone there on that quiet June day, my thoughts wandered back one hundred and twenty years to what was once doing on this hallowed ground. The mighty rumble and roar of a great city of half a million people behind me I no longer heard. I no longer saw its busy streets, its marble fronts, its towers and temples; they were melting away from my vision like some cloud-built, vanishing dream on the far off horizon. I saw instead a little town of seventeen thousand souls, called Boston, garrisoned by hostile British soldiers. I saw three thousand of them in the early morning hurriedly crossing Charles river and forming in line on the shore below me. I heard the sharp commands of Howe and Pigott and Percy and Pitcairn forming their well drilled veterans for the assault, and on the height above them I discovered the heads of a few hundred New England farmers, militia men, with picks and shovels throwing up a small redoubt and line of low earthworks to oppose them. I heard fife and drum, the measured tread of armed men marching proudly up the hill as on parade, but no sound from the breastworks before them; I saw Prescott walking calmly along the parapet steady and encouraging his men and I heard Putnam call out, "Don't fire, boys, till you see the white of their eyes!"

It was a moment of awful suspense, the red coats were within thirty yards when Prescott cried "Fire!" Then from that low wall flashed and roared a withering fire from a thousand Yankee marksmen. And then another volley. It was a dreadful slaughter. They fell like grass before the swift sweep of a scythe and the broken ranks turned

and fled, leaving the hillside strewn with their comrades, dead and dying.

Again they tried the hill and again were hurled back, shattered, defeated. No flesh could withstand that hail of lead, that awful carnage.

They huddled in disorder at the water's edge and no entreaties or commands could move them to try again until reinforcements arrived; and then a third time as the sun went down they rushed to the assault, this time with fixed bayonets. But our boys had fired their last cartridge and they had no bayonets.

It had been a gallant fight, one of the most desperate and bloody in all history for the numbers engaged, but it was hopeless, and they retreated slowly across Charlestown Neck into Cambridge, where Gen. Artemas Ward in command held the reserves and checked any further British advance—Gen. Artemas Ward, grandfather of our former townswoman, Mrs. Julia Wells, and great-grandfather of Maj. Henry Wells, Tracy Wells, Frank and Carrie Wells, whom you all knew here years ago.

But this tale of

“Old, forgotten, far-off things
And battles long ago,”

what has this to do with an address by me before your Knox County Historical Society?

It is, perhaps, like comparing great things with small, but as on that summer afternoon in Charlestown, unmindful of the bustling world so near around me, I saw visions and dreamed dreams of great deeds done on that sacred soil one hundred and twenty years before, so, returning as one of the early, one of the few surviving colonists after more than forty years of absence from your city, where my childhood, youth and early manhood were spent, it is not your busy streets, your thriving enterprises, your attractive residences, your tree-lined avenues, I see; my thoughts wander far back into the dim receding past, to the last days of October, 1836.

I see a weary little caravan of four covered wagons with a one-horse wagon in the lead, the Swift and Wilcox families emerging slowly from a small settlement called Knoxville, east of here, and men, women and children peering out with curious eyes upon a wide, uninhabited prai-

rie that was to be their future dwelling place—a forlorn and desolate prospect. Not a house, not a tree, hardly a sign of any living thing ever having passed that way before. It was the prairie land we had heard stories of a thousand miles away, and nothing but prairie as far as the eye could reach, except, perhaps, a glimpse of a distant forest along the northern horizon.

It was the last stage of a nine weeks' journey by wagon from Vermont across great states to the, at that day, extreme verge of civilization, where the friends we had left behind had forewarned us there was no water to be had, no wood to burn, no grain or fruit would grow and where hostile savages might take our scalps.

Ah, how many times since then have I in midsummer lain down in the shade of a shock of wheat, grown by my father from that same quick, responsive soil, and, watching the great Cumuli floating slowly overhead—the wide world rimmed around by the far off horizon—wondered if the Alps or the Appenines could be as grand as those magnificent thunderheads glorified by the rays of an afternoon sun! And years afterwards, returning from foreign lands, my memory charged with pictures of mountains and plains of Italy, Switzerland and Scotland, when our train struck the prairie this side of Chicago my heart leaped to my mouth at the first sight of these same prairies. I loved them then and I have loved them with a boundless love ever since.

But on that autumn day of 1836 it was different. When our lonesome caravan reached the spot where Galesburg now stands and welcomes her returning sons, my uncle, Erastus Swift, stood up in his open wagon in the lead and called out to my mother, “Here, Mary, is where the city of Galesburg is to be,” and my mother shouted back, “Neither you nor I, uncle, will live to see it.”

Do you wonder then, my friends, that I should seem to myself to be in a dream, recalling and comparing what then was here and what now is? For we, an advance guard of the great immigration following, were to begin here a fight for existence with the unknown forces of untamed nature, to build homes

where no homes had ever been, to lay foundations, to establish customs and laws brought from a great distance, to found a church, a school, a college which should be as a great light in the surrounding darkness.

The name of Dr. Gale, who planned this enterprise, can never be forgotten, for it is imbedded in the name of your city, but let it never be Vox, et praeterea nihil, a name, and nothing more. Let us cherish the memory of his personality, his courage, his far-sighted philanthropy, his always kindly persistence in watching over the beginnings and vigorous growth of this city and its noble institutions.

Nothing could be more fitting than the modest inscription on his tombstone in your Hope cemetery — *Si requiris monumentum circumspice*— If you would see his monument look around you.

Our long pilgrim journey came to an end at Log City, Henderson Grove, where some thirty families of us, some preceding us and some following, spent that winter. They called it Henderson Grove, but it was much more than a grove, it was a great primeval forest ten or twelve miles long, and from five to seven miles wide, of oak and elm, maple and black walnut, as noble a forest as ever grew, such a forest as no German, or Frenchman or Englishman then living ever saw in his own country, or we shall ever see again, I fear.

The few settlers we found living here in the edge of the timber were mostly Kentuckians, I think, although we called them Hoosiers,— as fine, sturdy and hospitable a race of men and women as ever faced pioneer life, but I remember I suffered a great deal from the teasings their boys gave me because I was a Yankee, a word of opprobrium I had never heard before.

When I implored them to tell me how long it would be before I became a Hoosier, too, they reckoned it would take about six months, which gave me encouragement.

Of course so large an influx of newcomers upon the few log cabin settlers along the edges of the timber made it difficult to secure any kind of shelter at first. For six weeks our two families, thirteen of us, occupied Jim Gum's log house of two rooms and a loft; later my father secured a

little lean-to, about twelve by fifteen, where our family managed somehow to survive that first winter of hardship in a single room much exposed to the weather, the snow sifting through on our beds at night, our food hoe cake, salt pork and prairie chicken, and not a potato, for they had all been securely housed and hoarded until spring under mounds in the garden where they grew. Cellars were unheard of! But what a luxury was my mother's old, cast iron cook stove which came around by the Gulf of Mexico and up the Mississippi to Yellow Banks, now Oquawka! It was a boon to the family when it came, as it had been four years before to me, for on its iron front, I learned from the makers' names my first A B C's.

But where I ask is that precious cook stove now, for it is just such old-fashioned, despised household furnishings that become heirlooms much sought after by collectors these latter days.

On Sundays or oftener we all gathered at Log City to meet people of our own kind in church, Sunday school and prayer meeting. Here in a rude log house Prof. Losey and Miss Lucy Gay began that school which, transferred the next autumn to the prairie, grew from year to year to become the fulfillment of Dr. Gale's early dream—Knox Manual Labor College.

Now, seventy years afterwards, to show how things come around again with time, manual training, somewhat modified it is true, from Dr. Gale's original design, is becoming a regular part of instruction even in our grammar schools. Which reminds me of another similar coming around as the years revolve. While teaching school one winter in Major Butler's neighborhood some ten miles west of here, I met a lady, a relative of his, ninety years old, then on a visit from her home in Kentucky, and many a thrilling tale she told of the "dark and bloody ground," and the Indian wars when she was young. When they went to church or across the oak openings she always rode horseback on a pillion behind her husband and he, with rifle resting across the saddle bow, and hand on rifle, kept his head turning in a half circle continually, sweeping the whole horizon with his glance to be prepared for any sudden

ambush from the redskins; and here now in our day when we try to cross our city streets, we, too, keep our heads turning in like manner as on a pivot, for fear of a like ambush from an equally savage automobile.

Permit me to recall here the names of a few of those brave men and equally brave women, all in the early prime of life, the first colonists as we call them. There was not a gray head among them unless it was Father Waters, and it is amusing to me now to remember how astonished I was when returning east eighteen years afterwards, I found there were gray headed men in the world and still alive.

Here are the names I recall, some arriving a few months before the Swifts and Willcoxes, and some a few months later: The Gales, Ferrises, Bunces, Wests, Waters, Hitchcocks, Farmhams, Williamses, Averys, Paynes, Simmonses, Holyokes, Mills, Kendalls, Finches, Stanleys, Prentices, Dunns, Sandersons, Chamberses, Allens, Phelps, Gilberts, Hamlins, Coltons, Churchills, Kings, Mays, Goodells, Hayners, Tylers, McMullens, Jerraualds, but are not these names, the most of them at least, inscribed on imperishable tablets in the vestibule of your Central church?

I remember well the first time I saw Dr. Gale; not so much, however, I confess, because it was Dr. Gale. As we passed through Whitesboro, N. Y., our long procession from Vermont halted in front of his house and Dr. Gale came down the path to greet us, leading by the hand a little girl, a vision of beauty to my boyish eyes—his daughter, Margaret, Maggie Gale, as we knew her later. Is there anything under heaven sweeter than a bright little maid of three years? Remember, she was only three and I was six, but I fell in love with her then and there. And through a long acquaintance with her afterwards, as girl, school-fellow and woman, the sudden admiration I felt at that first sight of her has never grown less, even though she did accept Prof. Hitchcock before me. But were not all the Gales remarkable for that winning virtue—amiability?

The spring of 1837 saw work doing on this open country, erecting houses, breaking prairie and making soft-

fences—does anybody here still remember the sod fence that once enclosed a part of the college property out along the Monmouth road? Shade trees had to be planted, too, mostly black locust, traps set for prairie wolves, rattle snakes in the tall grass of the sloughs had to be guarded against, and, in the spring and autumn we had to fight the prairie fires that came blazing and roaring down on us from the ridge south in magnificent but terrifying array miles long.

One pronounced characteristic of the colonists was their homogeneity; they were all from New England or one remove from New England, from New York, trained in one school, in the sturdy religious convictions handed down from their Puritan forefathers. But they were no swillers of beer nor was our pure prairie air ever contaminated by them with the vile stench of tobacco smoke.

Outside the stern necessity of making a living by daily labor and the primal object of giving their children a good education, three vital questions dominated their lives—the questions of temperance, abolitionism and conversion of lost souls, this last first and foremost.

In every original deed to land sold by the college was a clause forbidding the making or selling of liquor in any form on the premises under penalty of forfeiture of the title. We were all temperance people in those days. Everybody signed the pledge, or almost everybody. When I was seven years old the pledge was presented to me with the request to sign it as a matter of course, the others all did. "Does that forbid cider?" I asked. "Yes, my son, that certainly forbids cider." But I remembered how my old grandfather, back on the shores of Lake Champlain, used to smack his lips over a mug of hard cider brought up from the cellar, made from apples in his own orchard, and I had always wanted to know how that cider tasted. So I declined with thanks and have never signed the pledge to this day, nor broken it either. Yet at a Thanksgiving dinner in Berlin some years after when thirty-five of us young American students had assembled in memory of our old home, as fine a lot of fellows

as I ever knew, nearly every one of them holding honored professorships afterwards in American colleges, every one but one had signed the pledge when a young man at home, and every one but one drank wine at the table. I didn't blame them so much, but, for myself, I remembered Galesburg, Ill.

But our pronounced abolitionism made us a by-word and anathema to all the country round. Since we had then no large hall or opera house our big gatherings, our Fourth of July celebrations which were invariably anti-slavery meetings, were often in summer held in large arbors built of boughs and branches hauled by wagon loads from Henderson Grove and erected on or near the site of your present Union Hotel. Here I first felt the inspiring influence of a really great orator—Ichabod Codding—one of the greatest I ever listened to. As for music, we had Samuel Bacon, his fiddle and his well trained young people's chorus. No town was ever more fortunate than Galesburg in having so thoroughly trained a musician as he was in laying the foundations of a musical culture for future generations of singers, for he was an educated, enthusiastic musician, every fibre of him.

At one or more of these great abolition gatherings under that immense arbor of green boughs, the occasion was graced, I am proud to say, by the presence of two distinguished artists in song, a Parepa Rosa and Brignoli in short clothes, little Miss Margaret Gale and little Master Erastus Wilcox. You smile, and it is funny to think of, two little tots as we were, lifted up on a high bench in front of the chorus to entertain with juvenile songs and Mr. Bacon's fiddle a crowded audience of solemn Abolitionists. It makes me squirm to think of it. It was that glorious fiddle that did it, to be forever remembered and identified with those early Galesburg entertainments.

But after all, the most important thing, the chief end of man in those days in Galesburg, was to get converted and join the church; that is for the younger generation, for all the old folks belonged to the church already, or almost all. I remember

only one lonely exception later and after President Blanchard came in 1846, that was David Egerton, architect of our old First Church. During one of those revival seasons all the guns and prayers had been turned on him, but he could not be persuaded to come forward and make a profession of religion. Meeting him one day on the street alone, President Blanchard began laboring with him, threatening him, even, with the awful and sure fate awaiting him in the next world, if he did not join the church now, while mercy was freely offered and the lamp held out to burn.

I never shall forget what a shudder of pious horror went through my soul when it was reported that David Edgerton, that honest, upright man, had positively declined, assuring President Blanchard that he believed himself to be as good a man as President Blanchard himself, even if he did not belong to the church; for we were taught that the more moral and upright a man might be in this life, if he were not converted and one of the elect, the more awful was the fate awaiting him in the next.

David so far as I know never joined the church; he went to his account long ago, but how he settled that account I have never heard.

We had in those days revivals every winter, as part of a regular winter's course—prayer-meeting before breakfast, at noon, after school and sermons served to us hot every night; everybody on hand, everybody expected to stand up and give his testimony.

Now my father, although always a member and sometime elder in the church, lacked the gift of tongues, exhorting was not his strong point, and I never shall forget how hurt he was when President Blanchard, at one of the week-day meetings when everybody was in a wrought up state of mind, pointed his finger at him in the seat before him and said: "And there is Brother Wilcox, I have not seen a green leaf on him."

But it was previous to this in the winter of 1839-40, if I remember rightly, when we had the first awakening that I felt, when I was barely ten years old, attending the district school in the old Academy building up stairs.

Our teacher was a young man with a soul on fire, by the name of W. C. VanMeter, and, what with him pouring hot shot into us sinful youngsters and the Rev. Horatio Foote as chief revivalist doing the same to the older folks, we were kept moving pretty lively and the devil on the run.

Our school numbered about fifty scholars and, as soon as it struck 12 at noon, books and slates were laid aside, our little lunches, brought with us to save time for more serious business, were soon swallowed and then, seated in solemn rows around the four sides of the room, we had a season of prayer. Van Tuyle Gilbert, a handsome fellow, the tallest poppy in that field of wheat, took the only chair at the head of the room and led off with a hymn in which we all joined with unction. Then down we all dropped on our knees and praying began at the head of the row, proceeding without break until about a dozen had confessed what hardened sinners they were and begged forgiveness for themselves and a few other obstinate little wretches. Then up we all rose, another hymn, and down we went again for another dozen until we had gone the rounds. It was so soul satisfying to us kids! But in furtively peeping through my fingers once I observed with alarm that my cousin, Janet Follett, had not gone down on her knees with the others, but, on the contrary, sat bolt upright through the praying with eyes wide open. Oh, how anxious I felt for her precious soul, and how I labored with her on the way home to effect a change of heart.

A little later, our school room being needed for other uses, we boys trooped over in a body after school to a little shop on what is now Broad street, opposite your Santa Fe depot. Two of the older boys climbed up into the loft and began passing down a few brooms they found stored there, for sweeping the floor and saving our trousers. Now Mart Gilbert and I were of the same mature age, ten, and were good chums, and as we were burning to serve the Lord and be seen doing it, we demanded brooms, too, but were denied them as being too small for such a prominent responsibility. Whereupon, I regret to say, we became a little huffy—a purely righteous wrath,—and told them to

go ahead with their prayer meeting, we would have one of our own, and, shaking the dust off our feet, we marched across the road to a little stable opposite, climbed up through a small gable window facing our friends, and with plenty of clean hay to kneel on, started another meeting.

We sang a hymn, and sang it loud, more I fear for the edification of our friends opposite than for that of the angels above; then Martin led in prayer and I followed, then singing and praying turn about with one eye all the time on the party over the way until they broke up, shut up shop and started solemnly up the hill home. Then Martin and I had one more round and, climbing down, followed after with the immense satisfaction that we had had a more edifying season than the union shop opposite.

Among other pious admonitions, Mr. Van Meter one day called our attention to the fact that it was an unbecoming thing for young converts to indulge in worldly sports, games, or play of any kind. We therefore took a vow to be guilty of no such sin again. So for many days we boys marched around during recess with our hands thrust deep down in our trousers' pockets as a safe precaution, this way and that, up and down—a most forlorn lot of self-righteous little scamps.

But spring came and there happened to be a large straw stack in Deacon Holyoke's back yard near by, corner of Main and Prairie streets. I do not know what spirit of evil it was that led us over that way one noon, but we discovered the straw and admired it, we approached it, walked round it and looked it all over wistfully but as solemn as owls. Suddenly one of the little sinners, forgetful of his vows, and indifferent to the awful consequences, made a short run and turned a somersault in the straw. It was more than boyish nature could withstand. In five minutes every boy of us was tumbling, and rolling and wrestling in that straw. That was the end of the season's revival in Mr. Van Meter's school.

If you think my story of these early days is overdrawn, I beg you to remember that our fathers, our religious teachers, were the lineal descendants

of the Puritans and held still without questioning to the same literal interpretations of scripture they did, and that it was at that time barely one hundred years since Jonathan Edwards preached his famous sermon entitled "Sinners in the hands of an angry God." It may shock you but let me read you a few paragraphs from that discourse, as showing how different their views were from ours now concerning God as the all loving, all merciful Father of his offspring, the whole human race, the Shepherd of the "po' lost sheep of his sheepfold."

"There is nothing that keeps wicked men any one moment out of hell but the sovereign pleasure of God. They deserve to be cast into hell, justice calls aloud for an infinite punishment of their sins. The devil stands ready to fall upon them and seize them as his own at what moment God shall permit him." "This is the case of every one of you unconverted persons that are out of Christ. That lake of burning brimstone is extended abroad under you." "There is a dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God, there is Hell's wide, gaping mouth open." "The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over a fire, abhors you." "This is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral or strict, sober or righteous he may otherwise be." "There is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning but that God's hand held you up." There is no other reason why you have not gone to hell since you have sat here in the house of God. Yea, there is nothing else to be given as a reason why you do not at this very moment drop down into hell."

Incredible as it may seem that such doctrines could ever have been preached from the sacred pulpit, yet there they are in Vol. 7, page 163, of a ten volume edition of Jonathan Edwards' life and works, in our Peoria Public Library, preached July 8, 1741, in Enfield, Massachusetts, and attended, it says, with remarkable impressions on many of the hearers, which I should think likely.

And let me remind you further that at the time I am speaking of here that noted revivalist Burchard in the

east and the Rev. C. C. Finney, President of Oberlin College, Ohio, were preaching brimstone and thunderbolts in only a little less lurid style, perhaps, everywhere, as were our revivalists here. But not Dr. Gale so far as I remember. He was too kind hearted a man, too much of a Christian as we now understand it, too much of a gentleman.

I would not again go through the terror, the torment of soul I suffered for four or five years after I began to pay attention to sermons, not even to save ~~my~~ own—well, not for anything.

Overdrawn? No, I have given you the plain, unvarnished recollections of a sensitive child who suffered and bears the scars on his soul to this day.

And yet, and yet, when nearly every day brings its story of blood-curdling crime I recall Burns' lines—"The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip "To haud the wretch in order," and I am not sure ~~but~~ the dreadful doctrine had its uses and may yet be wanted again.

I have spoken of Prest. Blanchard in connection with the religious revivals but I should be sorry to leave the impression that I did not recognize and admire his many superior qualities as teacher, preacher, orator and leader of men, in each and all of which broad fields of human endeavor he was one of the ablest men I ever knew.

If he was at times a little too overbearing in trying to bring men to his views it was but a virtue carried to extremes—the almost inevitable characteristic of an exceptionality powerful intellect and strong will when dealing with matters of the church. It was the same with Bishop Philander Chase of Jubilee College and Bishop Whitehouse of Chicago, in their day.

Making allowance for this I think it not too much to say that he was the ablest man ever known in Galesburg, at least so far as my acquaintance goes.

At the age of thirteen—and you will remember we had only one year of preparatory Latin and Greek in those days—I was admitted as a freshman in Knox college, to the class in which my old friends Henry Sanderson and James Dunn graduated in 1847, but on the advice of my professors and greatly to my disappointment, my

father refused to let me go on: I was too young, perhaps a little precocious, my health would break down. I did not believe it then nor do I now, but no matter. I finally entered in 1847 in the class with Comstock and Churchill, a class of twenty-seven, the largest ever entering up to that date; but the California gold fever struck us in 1849, our class felt it and we graduated in 1851, a class of seven only.

With what tender affection do we college men remember our old class mates living or dead. Outside of family ties there are none so hallowed, so strong. And so also with our professors, the men who had the moulding of our characters during the four most impressionable years of life, in our day Professors Gale, Losey and Grant, and in our senior year, Prest, Blanchard—could we ever repay the debt we owe them? Only by following in their steps or by training other succeeding generations of pupils as Professors Comstock and Churchill did for more than forty faithful years in the same college.

And this college, Knox college, can I ever cease to remember with gratitude and affection the debt I owe to her and those honored names, her Professors, for the education they gave me here? If it had been possible since then to take from me what, in the days of my youth she gave me, it would have been robbing me of half my very life and soul.

There are colleges today with more modern, flamboyant pretensions in their courses of study but I must be permitted to doubt whether they do better work, give any better grounding in those essentials that go to the formation of character and fitting for the activities of a strenuous life, than was, and, I believe, still is given right here in my beloved Alma Mater.

George Churchill, my nearest neighbor when we were boys, my classmate and roommate for four years in college, my most intimate friend, closer than a brother all his life, was an honest man if there ever was one, honest, upright and true in every relation of life, in every calling wherein he was called. He had chosen medicine for his career but, on graduating, accepted temporarily a situation with the new railroad then working towards

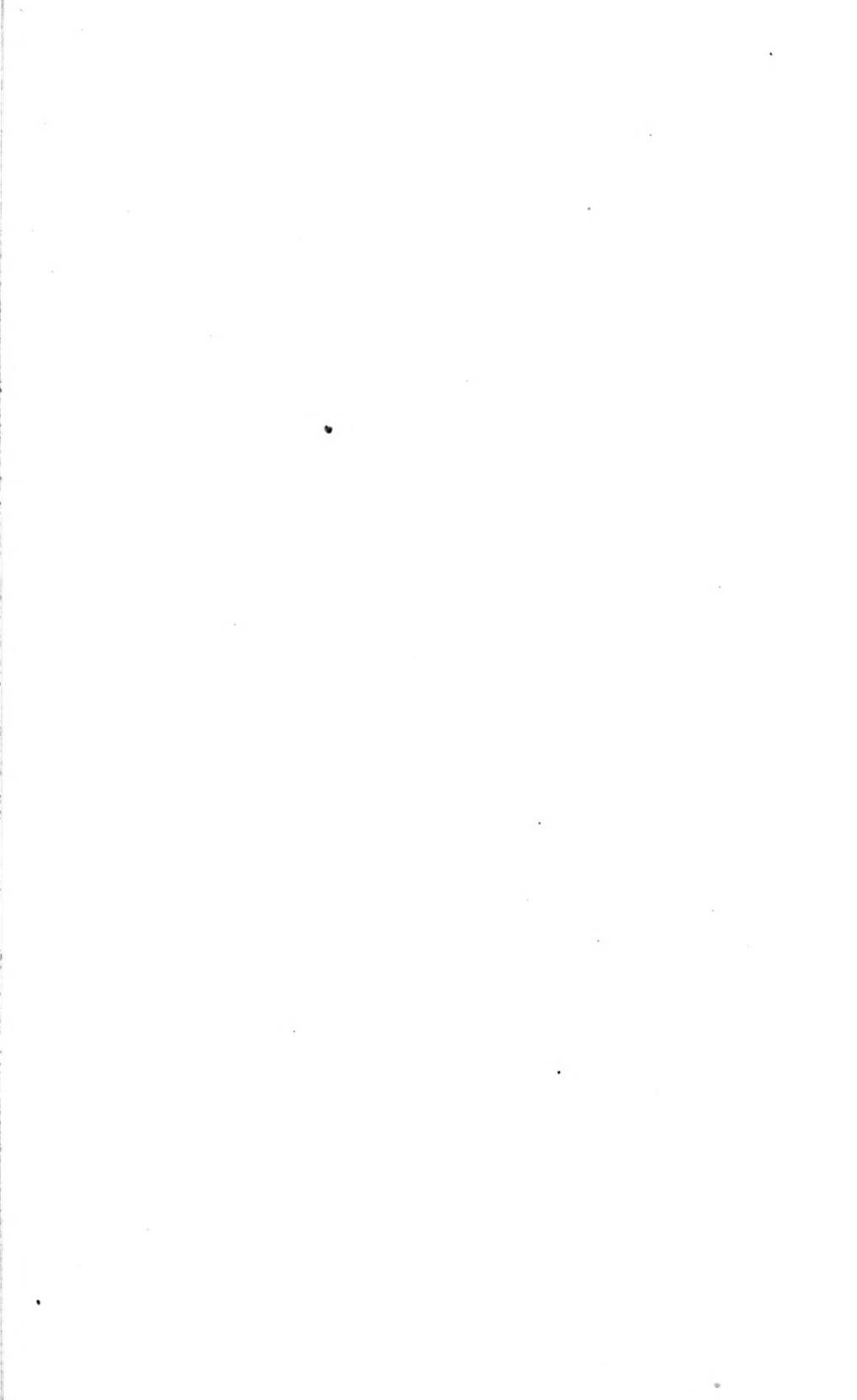
Galesburg from Aurora, Ill., called the Central Military Tract R. R., now the C. B. & Q.

I do not doubt that if he had continued with that company he would have risen by sure degrees to become a civil engineer, division superintendent, general manager, and at last, president of the road, and have left an estate of a million dollars for his heirs, but I had set my heart on seeing the old world and wanted him to go with me. I persuaded him to throw up his situation, save a little money by teaching private school two years while I, to learn the language, lived in a German family in Peoria, and so in September 1854, we two young fellows landed in Liverpool and discovered England. For, read about it as you may at home, you really do not know there is such a place as England until you put your foot in it.

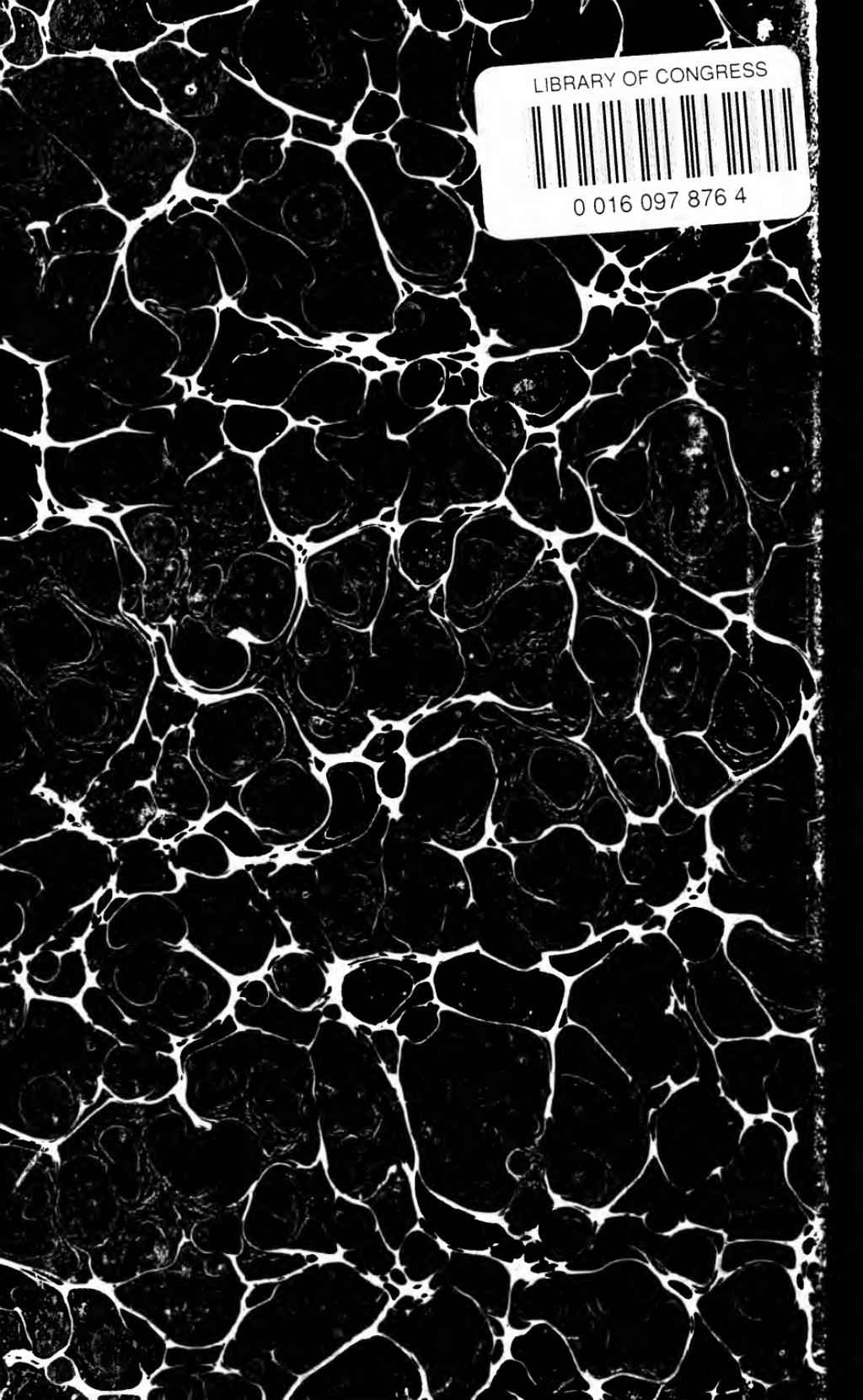
And we made the grand tour together—the first Illinoisans who ever did it—London, Berlin, Dresden, Prague, Vienna, Venice, Florence, Rome, Genoa, Switzerland, Paris, crossing the Appenines and the Alps on foot.

Knowing as we do now, what no man could have foreseen then, the enormous development of our country and of railroads in the last fifty years, I have sometimes asked myself whether it would not have been better for him to have staid with the railroad and not gone with me. I never dared ask him the question and he never hinted a reproach to me for overpersuading him. But looking at it at this distance of time, remembering also in comparison, the thousands of young men and women who revere his name and bless his memory for the good he did them as teacher, counsellor and friend, the seed he planted of noble thoughts and deeds which shall bear fruit for generations yet to come, looking at it in all its bearings, in the cold light of eternity, in which field of human endeavor would he have been the better servant of God and man?

I will not attempt to answer the question here, it is too personal a matter with me. I leave it confidently with you, his townspeople, neighbors and friends, who knew him long and well, to answer the question for me.







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